



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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# **IFHE ANNUAL REPORT 2008**



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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1. The IFHE President's Report**
- 2. Activities in the IFHE Regions**
- 3. Report on the Work of the Council and Programme Committees**
- 4. Cooperation with the Institutions of the United Nations**

# 1. The IFHE President's Report

## Dr. Geraldene HODELIN, Jamaica

### 1.1 International Symposium

In February 2008 the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) held an international symposium on the subject of *"Challenges for Home Economics – Equality of Women and Men in the Responsibility for Family and Housework"*. The symposium was supported by the Federal Ministry for Families, Women, Seniors, and the Youth. 84 participants from 22 different countries took part in the symposium in Heidelberg. With a focus on

- *"Gender Aspects – Division of Labour in the Family: Across Time and Countries"*, presented by Mary ANDREWS, Ph.D., USA
- *"Housework and the Role Cliché – Chances for a Change"*, explicated by Prof. Dr. Barbara METHFESSEL, Germany
- *"Aspects of Equality in Home Economics Education"*, expounded by Gerda CASIMIR, The Netherlands
- *"Ideas and Changes to Promote the Equality of Men and Women in Their Responsibility for Family and Housework"*, presented by Sidiga WASHI, Sudan
- *"Challenges for Home Economics – Towards a Realisation of the 'Work-Life Balance' for Women and Men"*, presented by Prof. Dr. Setsu ITO, Japan

the IFHE took up a central problem in societies worldwide which – despite long-standing demands by society and legal measures – has as yet led to only few satisfactory results in the industrialised Western world and the developing world. The methods, representations and changes by which Home Economics education and research could contribute more effectively to the advancement of an equality of women and men in family and housework were scrutinised.

### 1.2 XXI. IFHE World Congress

The XXI. IFHE World Congress took place in Lucerne, Switzerland in 2008.

More than 1100 participants from 54 different countries attended the centenary congress. The world congress was primarily concerned with the presentation and discussion of current research results from the different fields of action within Home Economics. The Research Committee organised 78 events, the Programme Committees 21.

(These will be discussed by the Council and Programme Committees under item 3.)  
In addition, 5 central Plenary Sessions were held on the following topics:

- *"Contextualising the Future: Demographic and Sociological Insights into the Future of Global Society and the Role of Individuals and Families in this Framework"* (Contributor: Dr. Thomas GRÖBLY, Switzerland)

In order to grasp the challenges that individuals and families face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Home Economics science must comprehend global demographic patterns; the same is necessary for core sociological insights.

The lecture delivered the basis for the subjects of the Plenary Sessions that followed. These dealt with the question of sustainability and the role of Home Economics as its defender.

- *“The Role of Education in Equipping Individuals and Families to be Resilient and Active Participants in the Global Community”* (Contributor: Dr. Ursula RENOLD, Ministry of Education, Switzerland)

To be able to cope with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, education plays a decisive role for individuals and families. What are the requirements education has to fulfil today?

- *“Celebrating the Past: A Critical Reflection on the History of the IFHE and the Home Economics Profession”* (Contributors: Prof. Dr. Virginia VINCENTI, USA and Prof. Dr. Kaija TURKKI, Finland)

Based on the IFHE’s centennial history, its development and achievements were critically discussed. Also, the contributors examined the social impact Home Economics has had in the past 100 years and its function today.

- *“Sustainability: Considering the Pillars of Sustainability as a Theoretical Paradigm”* (Contributor: Martin CARAHER, Ph.D., UK)

The contribution dealt with an important issue of contemporary history: it focused on the core aspects of sustainability in relation to Home Economics; these aspects include families, food and nutrition, habitation etc. The foundations of sustainability were pointed out and put in context with the above aspects.

- *“Consumers and Future Consumption; Patterns, Advocacy, Traits, Projections and Sustainability of Home Economics”* (Contributor: Francis NWONWU, South Africa)

This Plenary Session reviewed patterns of consumption, considering regional differences on a global scale as well as the present understanding of consumer behaviour. This meant examining the relationship between sustainability and patterns of consumptions and the role of Home Economics on this relationship. A wide variety of aspects is included in this issue, as for example food, clothing, and habitation.

- *“The Global Food Supply: The Malaysian Home Economist’s Response”* (Contributor: Tan Suri Napsiah OMAR, Malaysia)

Within the important issue of food supply especially the question of obesity and malnutrition in connection with the health problem stood at the centre of

the discussion, as did sustainability, equality, the effects on health and possible strategies targeting the consumption of fast food.

- *“Generational Theory and Home Economics – the Millennial Generation and Beyond – the Importance of Future Planning”* (Contributor: Dr. Donna PENDERGAST, Australia)

The presentation pointed out the behavioural patterns of different generations and their influence on the development of Home Economics as a vocational field. The findings and relationships permit a better understanding and serve as a basis for the future course of occupations in the field. It became particularly clear that the future of the federation lies in today’s millennium generation. Strategies can be deduced for the course of action that needs to be entered upon in the future and for a unique rapprochement to those who are the key personalities of the future.

- *“The Future of Home Economics – Possible Scenarios, Visionary Insights into the Future 2028”* (Contributors: Christina COLLINS, Emma COLLINS, James McINTOSH, Australia and UK)

The participants of the congress were alerted to critical questions of the future and asked to reflect on their possible role in this future. Information and communication technologies and their effects on families and the well-being of every individual were at the centre of attention. The presentation was prepared by the Young Professionals Network (YPN) of IFHE.

- *“Individual Empowerment as a Home Economist”* (Contributor: Sue MCGREGOR, Canada)

How can the individual strengths of each Home Economists be supported? How can everyone do his/her part to promote and advance Home Economics as a field and create a life-long process of learning? In her presentation Sue MCGREGOR pointed to the function of Home Economics in reaching this aim.

- *“Developing Critical Reflection for Home Economics Teachers – Advancing the Profession with Power, a Concept for the Future and Leadership”* (Contributors: Mary MAGEE, Sidiga WASHI, Joyce MOK, Tae Myung YOO, Ireland, Sudan, Singapore, and South Korea)

The last Plenary Session reviewed all the topics of the foregoing contributions and was concerned with providing recommendations on how Home Economics can be a factor in shaping the future of the global community and in finding the means to change the world for the better in a sustainable way. It became clear that through working together progress is feasible in different areas of action, such as health, food security, education and sustainability.

The topics of the Plenary Sessions addressed crucial challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and offered clues for the future course of Home Economics. The contributions were published in book form in time for the congress.

### 1.3 Position Statement Home Economics

In the year under report the IFHE published the fundamental “Position Statement Home Economics”.

The IFHE Position Statement acknowledges the historical basic concept of Home Economics as well as the subsequent declarations, glossaries and definitions adopted by the IFHE, yet insists on locating the profession in the contemporary context, looking ahead to viable and progressive visions of the future of Home Economics for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

The statement – *Home Economics in the 21st Century* – serves as a platform to achieve this goal. It intends to encapsulate the diverse nature of the field and hence throws a broad net to embrace its multiplicity and the various ways in which it has adapted to meet specific requirements, in terms of educational, business, social, economic, spiritual, cultural, technological, geographic and political contexts.

The Position Statement can be used to situate Home Economics in contemporary society, and may serve the purpose of providing defensible arguments for individuals and professional groups requiring such support.

Home Economics can be divided into **four dimensions or fields of practice**:

- an **academic discipline** to educate new scholars, to conduct research and to create new knowledge and ways of thinking for professionals and for society;
- an arena for **everyday living** in households, families and communities for developing human growth potential, for covering their basic needs as well as educational and vocational training requirements;
- a **curriculum area** that enables pupils and students to discover and improve on their own resources and talents to be used in their own personal life or as a norm that they can consult in professional decision-making processes;
- a **socio-political field** in which policies are developed to advance individuals, families and communities in all questions and problems of daily existence. The aim is to find and learn how to use new practices to promote private and general well-being and to provide the basis for sustainably securing the future.

The Position Paper was handed out to the participants of the congress and was added to the IFHE website. It provides the IFHE with the principles for further progress in its international work and for establishing areas of focus within it.

#### 1.3.1 Home Economics Advances the Aim of Sustainable Development and Quality of Life for All

Education in Home Economics supports teaching toward a sustainable development – by using, among other methods, modern information and communication technologies.

The central topic of the World Home Economics Day 2009 - 2011 is called "*Home Economics – Promoting Competences in the Digital Age*".

Since its inception – at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – education in Home Economics was aimed at strengthening individuals, families and communities and their well-being as well as advancing the ability for life-long learning.

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) – a global network of experts on Home Economics – is an international Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), with an advisory status at the United Nations (ECOSOC, UNESCO, UNICEF) and the Council of Europe.

Home Economics comprises different faculties, which it brings together for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchange. This bundling of expertise is indispensable because the experiences and challenges of daily existence are not typically one-dimensional.

Departing from these facts and considering the present challenges the IFHE believes that education in Home Economics is vital. This is in accordance with the targets of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005 - 2014). The IFHE released a Press Release on the World Home Economics Day in December 2008.

### **1.3.2 The Right to Food**

In line with its international work the IFHE supports the targets of the "Right to Food". The IFHE wants to help reach the millennium development goals, especially the elimination of extreme poverty and hunger. IFHE members all over the world work on strategies to fight poverty and hunger and to secure access to full-value nutrition for everyone. Food security is one of the central issues in the practice and research of Home Economists. It is the IFHE's aim to improve the quality of life of individuals, families and households by managing household resources considering what is necessary, appropriate and conducive to sustainable development. (The full text is available in English on the IFHE website under [www.ifhe.org](http://www.ifhe.org).)

### **1.4 Improvement of the Service for Members**

The IFHE website was completely relaunched in 2008 in order to allow for an easy access to, and extensive information in, the different subject areas. It is particularly noteworthy that an area for the publishing of historical IFHE material online has been created. It is directly connected to the IFHE archive in France.

Furthermore, the creation of an interactive platform especially for the newly-founded Programme Committee Household Technology and Sustainability was initiated. It is due to be completed and ready to permit speedy professional exchange by the spring of 2009.

The four issues of the IFHE newsletter were published on time. Among these, a special edition was designed for the IFHE Centennial Congress 2008.

The recent history of the federation has been published in book form and released on DVD.

## **2. Activities in the IFHE Regions**

### **2.1 Region of Africa**

The participation of members from African countries was greatly complicated by considerable problems with their entry visas. Only 36 members were granted entry.

In Africa a quilting project was initiated and successfully brought on the way by the members. The proceeds will be used to fund future educational projects in the field of Home Economics in Africa. The content of the important IFHE Regional Africa Conference in the second half of 2009 was prepared. It will be organised by the University of Swaziland. An IFHE workshop is scheduled.

To improve funding for the cooperation in Africa, it was decided to collect a 5 € fee per member. The high costs of travel are still the biggest obstacle to participation in major IFHE events.

### **2.2 Region of the Americas**

The Regional Conference Americas was held as part of the IFHE World Congress 2008 in Lucerne. Among the topics discussed were the nomination of the next Vice-President and ways to motivate people to join the IFHE as members: special emphasis was put on the idea of offering correspondence courses leading to academic degrees in Home Economics. Particularly in developing countries in the Caribbean such programmes could be very useful in helping teenagers and young adults to receive a vocational qualification or degree. The biennial Meeting of Home Economists is announced to take place in Brazil in 2009.

The Caribbean Association of Home Economists (CAHE) announced its conference, which will be held from 5 - 8 April 2009 in Grenada. It will revolve around the topic *“Supporting Communities and Professions for Sustainable Home Economics”*

Members in Canada intended to organise an IFHE Conference, including a Council Meeting in 2014. The planning and application process were started in 2008.

US members presented the results of their development project, which is still running, at the IFHE World Congress 2008. Four new projects will receive funds in the future. Of the funded projects the focus is mainly on improving families' nutrition and education for children and adolescents.

## **Caribbean**

A conference in Nassau, Bahamas will be taken place directly after the IFHE Leadership Meeting 2009 in Kingston, Jamaica.

In the USA the IFHE Regional Annual Meeting was held with great success in Reno, NV. The panel discussion on the integration of international contents and activities in the education of adults, in secondary education and in academic studies turned out to be particularly interesting.

The IFHE quilting project for the 2008 congress developed well in 2007. 38 squares were sent in.

## **Brazil**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Home Economics conference in Brazil took place in Rio de Janeiro in October 2007. The presentations and discussions dealt with the topic of *“Home Economics in the Light of Sustainability and Globalisation”*. A participant from Ecuador emphasised the importance of Home Economics for rural communities and the need for education in Home Economics.

## **2.3 Region of Asia**

The IFHE members in Asia prepared their 15<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference in India. At the centre of the conference stands the topic *“Social Uplift trough Human Empowerment in Perspective of Home Economics”*.

The 2007 ARAHE Congress took place in Malaysia; more than 400 participants registered and presented 200 research reports.

The IFHE President Lilha LEE from South Korea has strongly advocated the IFHE and through her dedication has greatly raised membership rates in Asia.

ARAHE’s scientific journal, which is influential in the Asian region, is published four times a year. It is mainly financed through donations!

The next ARAHE Congress will be held in Mumbai, India, in 2009. In 2008 it celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The ARAHE website was launched in 2007, please see under: <http://arahe-web.com>. It is already linked to the IFHE website!

## **2.4 Region of Europe**

As part of the IFHE convention a small workshop was held. It was debated how the IFHE could strengthen Home Economics related professions, encourage and support research in the field and improve education. The presentations were published on the IFHE website!

Michael CHOLEWA MADSEN was chosen as the new IFHE representative at the Council of Europe.

Dr. Mary MAGEE was elected the IFHE Vice-President for Europe from 2008 - 2012. For the first time the election was conducted online via the IFHE website. An electronic IFHE Europe Newsletter received only a faint response.

## **2.5 Region Pacific**

In the Pacific region membership could be doubled in the last four years. New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa could be won as new members.

Home Economics Victoria had decided to hold the XXII. IFHE World Congress in Australia in 2012; an accordant invitation and presentation had followed at the 2008 IFHE Congress.

To prepare for the IFHE Centenary Congress in 2008 Home Economics Victoria had arranged a pre-congress tour to Italy. More than thirty Australian experts in Home Economics participated.

# **3. Reports from the Council and Programme Committees**

## **3.1 General Information – IFHE Position Statement 2008**

The position paper for a reorientation of Home Economics was edited for various purposes. Seven experts worldwide were asked to give their opinions about the position paper. It was published in the first IFHE e-journal in time for the 2008 Congress, where they had been presented and discussed during the session for federations.

## **3.2 Publications**

After detailed discussions and examinations, the Council Committees Research and Publication and Communication found that there is no sufficient funding for a print version of an international academic journal. Therefore, the option of an electronic academic journal was deliberated and finalised. From 2008 on the IFHE will issue an academic journal electronically twice a year. The costs for layout and editorial are projected at 6000 € per year. The first issue had been published on the occasion of the 2008 Congress.

### **3.3 Council Committee Research**

The Research Committee received more than 400 contributions in reaction to the call for papers for the 2008 Congress. These were examined in two stages. A pre-check was done electronically; the final examination was conducted during a meeting in Finland. A total of 362 research papers were approved for the 2008 Congress. Some of them were assigned to the Best Practice category, others to special Programme Committees. The approved research papers were grouped by subject and a programme of the presentations was devised for the parallel sessions at the Congress.

### **3.4 Programme Committee Consumer Issues and Family Resource Management**

The committee had started a project preparing the publication of an e-book for the 2008 Congress. 100 papers from all over the world were submitted.

Some papers had been presented as posters at the Congress. The e-book was presented there and a free copy handed out to the participants.

### **3.5 Programme Committee Food Security and Nutrition**

The committee's main concern continues to be "*The Dual Burden of Faulty Nutrition*". A "Call for Papers" dealing with the subject was issued and a workshop for the 2008 congress put on the agenda.

In the discussion special emphasis had been put on the role of Home Economics can and should assume in the fight against faulty nutrition.

### **3.6 Programme Committee Institutional and Hospitality Management**

The "Call for Papers" on the subject of "*Managing Large Households and Home Economics Businesses improves the Quality of Life of Residents and Beneficiaries*" met with such great response that two workshops were scheduled for the 2008 Congress. Furthermore, a survey was developed to assess the situation of senior citizens in Home Economics facilities and to allow for a global comparison. The survey was distributed at the world congress.

### **3.7 Programme Committee Home Economics Policies in Education and Training**

One of the committee's major aims is to compare the curricula for Home Economics at different levels of education. Samples of the results had been presented in workshops at the congress. A template had been provided by the committee on the IFHE website.

On the whole three workshops had been scheduled, each of which had been supplemented by presentations.  
The aim is to publish as many curricula as possible online by the end of 2008.

### **3.8 Programme Committee Gender and Families in Development**

Committee members participated in two important events on the gender issue in Scandinavia. The committee had organised the international IFHE Workshop for the Symposium in February 2008 in Heidelberg. The subject under discussion was: *“Challenges for Home Economics: Equality of Women and Men in the Responsibility for Family and Housework”*. The programme included six scientific reports from Japan, the USA, the Netherlands, Germany, Sudan, and Jamaica.  
At the congress the Programme Committee offered a seminar for an in-depth discussion of the subject matter.

### **3.9 Programme Committee International Business Group**

Thematically, the congress stood at the centre of the committee’s activities during the period covered by this report. An academic excursion to Nestlé as well as two seminars on the current challenges facing companies operating in the field of Home Economics had been prepared.

### **3.10 Programme Committee Textiles and Design**

In a global comparison the Programme Committee Textiles and Design found that designing home textiles is ranked very differently as part of the curricula. The same is true for tailoring. However, the subject *“Designing Home Textiles and Tailoring”* helps preserve cultural identity. Against this backdrop the committee had prepared a presentation of special textile works for the 2008 congress. In addition, a workshop with subject-specific presentations was planned and realised.

## **4. Cooperation of the IFHE with the UN Agencies**

### **4.1 UNESCO Activities**

In 2007 the UNESCO General Conference, taking place every four years, was held. Also, the Council of NGOs came together for its half-yearly meeting; various expert committees also met, e.g.:

- Education for Everyone
- Science and Ethics
- Cultural Diversity for Peace
- Fight against Poverty

- Human Rights and
- Communication.

The major subjects of the UNESCO Programme were

- Human Rights and
- Equality of the sexes.

#### **4.2 Collaboration with the UN Agencies in New York and Vienna**

The IFHE representatives are actively involved in the UN Committee Work on NGOs, for example in those on Children's Rights and the Family.

IFHE members were significantly involved in drafting the UN INGO Committee's statement "*Advancing Towards Full Employment: Appropriate Work for Everybody!*"

The aspects of family-friendly working hours, equality of women and men, development of appropriate workplaces for the disabled and the handicapped were stressed in particular.

The IFHE statement on women's status was presented at the 51<sup>st</sup> UN/NGO Committee Meeting on the Status of Women.

The statement was published on the IFHE website.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the UN DPI/NGO was held in New York in February 2007. An IFHE representative was actively involved in the work of the preparatory committee.

"*Climate Change – Ramifications for All of Us*" was the central topic. The conference was opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

In the subcommittee "*United Differences: The Influence of Climate Change on Families*" the IFHE was involved in creating the concept for a film that was presented at the conference.

Furthermore, the IFHE was actively engaged in the committee session "*The Ageing Society*" as well as in the discussion group "*Discrimination Against Girls – A Human Rights Perspective*".

#### **4.3 IFHE as Part of the Work at the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)**

On behalf of the INGO's ad hoc work group the IFHE representative gave a statement at the FAO in which she discussed the role and importance of the INGO in their work with the FAO. Proposals for an expansion of the collaboration were submitted.