



IFHE PRESIDENCY 2020-2024

Gwendolyn HUSTVEDT starts her term as IFHE President and shares her vision on a way forward

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is responsible for safeguarding both the legacy and the future of Home Economics as we move from one era into another. The role of the President of IFHE has naturally changed over the years as the forces of time, change and evolution has shaped the organizations, sub-disciplines, methods of intellectual engagement and kinds of individuals who are drawn to our more than century long effort to promote Home Economics throughout global society. When I ran for the position of President for IFHE, I was well aware of the tensions of change at a pace and scale that almost everyone agrees is rapid and immense.



Gwendolyn HUSTVEDT
IFHE President

I grew up in the mountains of Colorado, where we are drawn to sports like orienteering, mountain climbing and white-water rafting. I know that we all feel like we are racing headlong through the dark, the tiny circle of our headlamp on the map that is our only guide. We clutch at the rope we willingly threw over the side of the rock, knowing that it is the only safe way down after our climb to perilous heights. We fill our lungs with the roar of freezing water as we hurtle through rapids and rocks, knowing we will never feel more alive. I want to harness the spirit of daring and adventure, a spirit that I know is not limited to one kind of woman from one kind of place, to ask the members of this organization to join me in facing the advancing unknown. In this time of uncertainty, I too long for the safety of the fireside, the warmth of yarn in my hands, the comfort of knowing I am safe at home but I also know that, even in the circle of our sturdy companionship, we can search for ways to be strong and brave that fit the moment in which we find ourselves.

I have promised you a look at the vision for a way forward that will guide my time as the President of the IFHE. My focus over these next few years will be on our opportunities for Communication and Collaboration. The prime example of this is World Home Economics Day. This is an international event that belongs to us, as an organization that speaks for Home Economics on the global level. We can embrace the mission of expanding its relevance to all Home Economics professionals as individuals and through their national, regional and academic based organizations. We have already selected the themes for the event over each of the next four years and I look forward to working with you on making each successive World Home Economics Day more rich and effective than the last.

Speaking for Home Economics is an important responsibility and I would like to see each member of the federation given access to the training in advocacy that has made other NGOs so successful in shaping the conversation around the health and well-being of families and communities. The number of opportunities for us to communicate who we are can seem

overwhelming but one avenue that we have already seen an example of the benefit of this advocacy is at the United Nations.

The three professional home economists who wrote a compelling statement about protecting women from land dispossession for the 58th Commission on Social Development joined me in New York in February and we attended sessions across the meeting, speaking with UN diplomats and representatives of other NGOs. It was such a joy after three days of advocacy to see the light of recognition and have someone say to me when I introduced myself, "I heard Home Economics was back!" We need to train more members to represent us in more places that the UN meets and we need to seize more opportunities to write statements that reflect our concerns and join partners in their statements. And speaking of writing, a young man who works full time to represent the International Federation for Family Development showed me a publication that his organization sponsored jointly with the UN and the faculty at a University in Spain. He said that that presenting research on the importance of parenting education through the framework of the UN sustainable development goals had made the publication accessible to policy makers and educators alike. We have already done good work on the first several UN Sustainable Development goals, finding opportunities to collaborate on Joint materials with partners about the role of Home Economics in achieving the UNSGDs will be one of my goals.

I am conscious that I am the youngest Home Economist to be elected to lead this organization but I am also aware that I represent a bridge to the coming generation of professionals who we need to empower to take up the spindle or spatula so to speak and make Home Economics a force for good in the 21st Century. The pandemic has shown us how urgent and relevant our work can still be in a world of people seeking the shelter of their homes. I will work to strengthen collaboration with those National and Regional Organizations who are standing proud at this time and I will also seek out, listen to and encourage those that may have fewer opportunities for collaboration due to a current lack of organization in their disciplines and or regions. Accidents of history happen all the time but we can't let an accident of history wipe out Home Economics from a disciplinary field or country while there are still home economists ready to speak up. I will be asking each member of the EC and also those who consider themselves leaders in their regions to consider who they could mentor for leadership, just as I and other young professionals were mentored by so many excellent leaders during the beginning of our second century as an academic discipline and as a profession. We must identify or create more partners, more colleagues, more stories, more visions that communicate our future together. Thank you for your steadfast willingness to serve, with me, our cherished family of Home Economics.

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See Gwendolyn's video statement on youtube:
https://youtu.be/rXKh_CasZ8