IFHE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

Position Statement

On the Integral Role of Home Economics in Advancing STEAM Education and the Sustainable Development Goals

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Introduction

The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) affirms the critical alignment between Home Economics and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We emphasise the essential contributions of Home Economics to advancing Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education. Home Economics is an integral partner, as a globally adaptable and socially responsible discipline that fosters applied knowledge, sustainability and wellbeing through STEAM-based learning.

About IFHE

Founded in 1908, IFHE is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) with consultative status at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1952), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1965), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC, 1981). IFHE is also associated with the UN Department of Global Communications and UN Department of Public Information.

IFHE represents the profession of Home Economics and includes Home Economists working in a range of fields including education, health promotion and research across nearly 70 countries, from emerging to advanced economies. Our members are uniquely positioned to contextualise Home Economics education to suit local cultures, resources, technologies and challenges, making Home Economics an essential platform for inclusive, accessible and relevant STEAM learning worldwide.

Purpose of this Statement

This Position Statement aims to inform, advocate and influence Member States, national governments, educational institutions, policymakers, school leaders, industry partners, and global education networks about the essential contributions of Home Economics to STEAM education.

Home Economics is a strategic partner providing foundational STEAM education that is holistic, applied and future-focused. Home Economics cultivates technical skills and capabilities, ethical reasoning, systems thinking, creativity and sustainable innovation. All of which drive success from the classroom to industry to policy initiatives.

IFHE's Position - Wellbeing and quality of life as core principles of Home Economics

Home Economics professionals are committed to enhancing wellbeing and quality of life through exploration of ethical and sustainable living practices. This is expressed through learning in areas such as food, clothing and textiles, housing and shelter, health, family, and household choices and management. Globally, Home Economics may be known by various names - such as Food

and Textiles Technology, Family and Consumer Sciences, Human Ecology, Hospitality. Regardless of local nomenclature, Home Economics classes serve as a gateway and meaningful opportunity for students to develop foundational STEAM competencies in real-world contexts.

Home Economics exemplifies STEAM in action by integrating theory and practice from and across STEAM Domains including, for example:

STEAM Domain	Home Economics Application
Science (Applied)	Investigate the chemistry and microbiology of food safety, hygiene and nutrition through applied kitchen science.
Science (Health)	Evaluate how the stages of human development across the life course influence wellbeing, decision-making, and social participation.
Technology (Transportation)	Analyse the role of food and textile supply chains to appreciate the journey from farm to home and the role of technology in waste reduction.
Technology (Production)	Examine how sustainable fashion and textiles addresses social and environmental impacts of the clothing cycle.
Engineering (Civil)	Learn about sustainable home design and construction using eco-friendly materials, efficient water management systems and localised small-scale food gardens.
Arts (Applied)	Apply design thinking to create aesthetic and/or functional textiles or food creations blending practical skills with electronics, technical drawing, written plans and creativity.
Arts (Humanities)	Explore how diverse economics frameworks can inform sustainable practices and decision-making at local, national and global levels.
Mathematics (Arithmetic)	Explore data to inform budgeting, managing household expenses, costing projects, time management, interpreting and adjusting patterns and recipes.

These indicative examples demonstrate the academic and global relevance of Home Economics in a STEAM context.

International Interests - Contributions to global education initiatives

Home Economics aligns with a range of United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those promoting quality education (SDG 4), health and wellbeing (SDG 2, 3, 6), gender equality, sustainability and climate action (SDG 5, 13, 16), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). Through our interdisciplinary and applied curriculum, Home Economics enables individuals, families, and communities to apply STEAM concepts in ethical and evidence-based decision-making that strengthens human wellbeing and advances sustainable development. We teach responsible ecological practices in the near and global environment by encouraging critical and ethical evaluation of choices and actions based on seeing ourselves as compassionate, creative and active local and global citizens.

Actions and Recommendations

1. **Invite Collaboration, Utilise Expertise, and Partner with Home Economics to Strengthen Foundational STEAM Education**
    - Invite collaboration across various sectors, industries and communities to harness Home Economics' unique capacity to integrate theory and practice for real-life problem solving, sustainability and holistic approaches to wellbeing and education.
    - Utilise the expertise of Home Economics professionals to embed applied practices within national and regional STEAM education policies and curriculum frameworks.
    - Partner strategically with Home Economics associations, educators, and researchers to co-design educational policies that ensure students develop practical capabilities, ethical reasoning, and interdisciplinary understanding alongside academic knowledge.
2. **Invest in Professional Development for Home Economics Educators**
    - Specialised expert educators are essential for delivering high-quality Home Economics education that meets contemporary challenges and integrates new and existing technologies.
    - Implement continuous professional development programs for Home Economics teachers to keep them up to date with the latest advancements in STEAM education, sustainable practices, and complex problem-solving and prevention.
3. **Facilitate Research and Innovation in Home Economics**
    - Ongoing research and innovation are crucial for advancing the field of Home Economics and thereby its contributions to modern educational needs and sustainable development.
    - Support research initiatives and collaborations that explore new methodologies, technologies, and practices in Home Economics, emphasising its role in achieving the SDGs and enhancing STEAM education.

Conclusion

Home Economics is a future-focused field of study and an essential component of 21st century education. Drawing on its rich and significant historical foundations, Home Economics offers a bridge between science and society, empowering learners to develop technical competencies, ethical judgement, and a commitment to sustainable living.

The International Federation for Home Economics urges the United Nations and its partners to recognise, utilise and mobilise the transformative capacity of Home Economics as a foundational discipline within STEAM education to advance the Sustainable Development Goals and enhance global wellbeing.

Signed on behalf of the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE)

Amanda McCloat
President, IFHE
Date: