

Introduction

Aspects of Home Economics in the Mediterranean Region: From Food to Sustainability; From Curriculum to Community

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Every four years the International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) holds a World Congress where Home Economics (HE) professionals and students gather to discuss current global issues as they impact individuals, families, communities and our planet. The congress focuses on the role of HE education and Home Economists in fostering wellbeing by sharing research and best practice, whilst considering emerging trends. The first World Congress in 1908 in Fribourg Switzerland had the theme *The Training of Home Economics teachers*. The most recent Congresses had the themes *Home Economics: Soaring Toward Sustainable Development* (Atlanta, 2022) and *Bridging the Past – Charting the Future* (Galway, 2024). These three themes alone reflect the value that the HE discipline gives to quality education, to responsible and smart resource management for global sustainability, and to the need to recognise what works in different contexts and what requires changing and researching so that HE education and professional service can truly help improve quality of life for all.

Inspired by this HE legacy, we approached the Editor of the Malta Review of Educational Research (MRER) to propose a special issue on HE Education in the Mediterranean region, which was gladly accepted. As the Call went out for articles we acknowledged that HE is

implemented differently in the various countries. In some countries, HE is a curricular or programmatic subject in its own right, whether at compulsory school level or at tertiary level; in other countries certain core components, such as food and nutrition education, are also addressed in other disciplines.

This collection of articles from around the Mediterranean basin touches diverse aspects of HE: from Mediterranean diet adherence to nutrition education for healthy sustainable eating; from household food expenditure to impact of childhood cooking experiences; from curriculum gender influences to HE futures; and from HE teacher training, to formal and informal HE Education. The articles provide a richness of data on the different issues tackled, offering facts, insights and critical reflection. This was also confirmed by the multiple reviewers which hailed from different continents and who helped to make this MRER issue a quality compendium of HE as it is operationalised and perceived in Malta and neighbouring countries.

We thank all the authors who contributed to this Special issue and all the Special Issue reviewers who provided valuable feedback. We also thank the MRER Editor Prof Carmel Borg and Associate Editor Prof Milosh Raykov for their continuous support.

We augur that you will enjoy and be inspired by the articles as much as we were.

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