

Matka-apuraharaportti

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Every four years the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) hosts a World Congress where researchers, teachers and educators have possibility to meet, share latest research and collaborate. Since 1908, World Congresses are organized and in September 2022, congress was held in Atlanta, United States with the theme of “Home Economics: Soaring Toward Sustainable Development”. Congress was supposed to take place already in 2020, but due to the coronavirus situation, it had to be postponed. Finally, congress welcomed participants from 35 countries even though less people participated in person than earlier years. At the same time, this did not reduce the nature and importance of the congress in terms of dealing with home economics issues. Additionally, for the first time, it was possible to participate online, and the congress app connected participants worldwide.

The plenary sessions provided plenty of exciting initiatives, e.g. the introduction of the HERO project that maps the oral history of home economics, and interesting statements of Immediate Past President of The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Robert Van Dyke. His presentation reminded us of diversity, equity, and inclusion from a home economics perspective, and how to act. Reflect on your values and biases, try something new and act. In addition, Development Manager of Martha Association (Marttaliitto) Terhi Lindqvist held an impressive presentation of the history of Martha Association and development cooperation work with African women’s organizations.

Kristi: The timing of the conference was very good considering the current phase of my doctoral thesis. I had an oral presentation in one of the concurrent sessions to present my second study. I appreciate the opportunity to perform in front of members of the international community because it provides an experience that cannot be obtained anywhere else. Having focused on the professional development of home economics student teachers, I selected from the proposed sessions those that related my subject area, for examples the presentations which addressed, subject teachers' perceptions or student teachers' learning from practice experiences. While listening to the presentations, I gained many thoughts and experiences, the subsequent discussions allowed me to further develop thoughts and ideas from different perspectives.

Kati: IFHE is the only worldwide organization focused on Home Economics, so being part of the conference was meaningful and memorable. As an early-career researcher, participating in the conference gave me great opportunity to broaden my perspectives and additionally, to network with colleagues from all over the world. I had a poster presentation, which was excellent chance to

discuss current issues informally through my research. In addition, people were interested in home economics education in Finland and our education system in general, as I was guessing in advance. Wide variety of the research topics and interesting conversations were the best part of the poster session. Combination of my own presentation, other sessions with diverse research topics and interesting plenary sessions opened new perspectives of home economics.

To sum up, through the conference presentations, plenary sessions and interaction with the participants, the conference came to recognize how powerful the organization as a whole is. The feeling that you are not alone with your thoughts and actions, and that together we are stronger. We have the opportunity to introduce new ideas and principles into our daily activities in order to develop ourselves and develop home economics education.

We are grateful for the Foundation of Elli Suninen and Rachel Troberg for the opportunity to attend this conference and experience being part of the great and diverse home economics professional community.

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Kati Oikarinen is a doctoral researcher and university teacher at University of Helsinki. Her current research interests are videographic methods and multimodal interaction in home economics classroom.