

A HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS SERVICES

Compiled by Board Member, Ruth E. Norman

Introduction and Overview

Thirty-six years ago, in the fall of 1974, International Home Economics Services (IHES) was organized by a small group of home economists working in Washington, D.C. All in the group had been involved with colleagues from many other countries and recognized the value of continued interaction and the giving of support and encouragement. The group was brought together by Patsy Graves, who had worked in Brazil, Nigeria and India, and Helen Strow who had worked for short terms in Egypt, Nigeria, and the Philippines and with many government programs. IHES was incorporated in Washington, D.C. in 1974 with Flemmie Kittrell, Patsy Graves and Helen Strow signing the incorporation papers. Other Board members at that time were Margaret and William Morris and Kathleen Flom.

Through the 1980's to 2008 more Board members were added although the number, according to the by-laws, never exceeded 14. As members retired or were no longer able to participate new members were invited or elected:

Early 1980's: Betty Bay, Jessie Taylor, Mary Schlick and Nancy Leidenfrost

Mid 1980's: Ruth Norman, Wanda Montgomery and Naurine McCormick

Late 1980's: Janett Gibbs, Mary Margaret Hoffman, and Maria De Colon

1993: Alberta Hill

1996: Mary Andrews, Juanita Mendenhall and Mel Thompson

2000 - 2008: Marguerite Scruggs, Gwen Newkirk, Mary Beaubien,
Mary Crave, Mary Keith and Deborah Tippett.

Present active Board members in 2010 are: Mary Andrews, Mary Crave, Alberta Hill, Peg Hoffman, Janett Gibbs, Mary Keith, Nancy Leidenfrost, Juanita Mendenhall, Wanda Montgomery, Ruth Norman, Deborah Tippett and Mel Thompson. Marguerite Scruggs and Gwen Newkirk, no longer active, are Associate members.

The Board selects programs on the basis of established objectives stated in the by-laws. These are:

- Strengthen or develop formal and non-formal home economics programs in less developed countries;
- Utilize the expertise of U.S. home economists to assist colleagues;
- Enable women to fully participate in the development process of their countries and their professional associations;
- Cooperate with other groups including the International Division of AAFCS.

The Board develops goals and procedures for each project in cooperation with those requesting assistance. A formal plan includes agreement of the IHES Board, the persons initiating the request and any agency or government unit involved. During the past 35 years, IHES has assisted projects in Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Asia and Central America. Projects have varied in size—from small to large—and length of time—from a few days to several years.

Projects – 1974 – 1986

Study Grants: Grants were given to two African students to study in the United States.

Guatemala: After an earthquake destroyed a community home economics center where IHES had held a workshop for extension workers, IHES sent books to help replace those lost.

Cameroon, West Africa: A home economist in the community development department (CD) sought assistance with a population education project. IHES obtained the services of Norma Simpson who taught 30 CD workers in English and Therese de Clercq, who trained the same number of French speaking CD officers.

Jamaica: Helen Strow, IHES President, and the Extension Home Economist in Jamaica shared responsibility in planning a Region of Americas workshop on income generating projects. Valuable contacts were made there with those who were later involved in IHES projects.

Bogota, Columbia: IHES held a two week workshop titled "Income Generation for Rural Women". A committee of IHES Board members developed a manual which was the basis of the workshop, and could be used as a reference to conduct similar workshops by the participants for their own programs. Two American home economists conducted the workshop which was attended by 18 Home Economists from Latin American countries.

Nassau and the Dominican Republic: During the late 1980's and early 1990's Mary Beaubian, at that time a volunteer consultant, worked with schools in these two countries; IHES sent much needed books to the home economics programs.

PROJECTS – 1986 to 2000

Costa Rica: IHES joined with the Illinois Family and Consumer Sciences organization to provide training for the use of the solar cooker in Costa Rica. Two representatives of the home economics teachers of Costa Rica traveled to Illinois to receive training which was headed by Peg Hoffman of IHES.

The Caribbean: IHES has been involved with the Caribbean islands of the West Indies, the Bahamas, and Jamaica since the Mid-1980s through the Caribbean Association of Home Economists (CAHE), the professional association of home economics teachers and educators in the English-speaking Caribbean and Guyana, (<http://www.ceramtex.com/cahe>). CAHE assumed a leadership role in working with IHES on projects in the region. IHES stays in close contact with those members of CAHE whom they have worked with over the years. Board members of IHES regularly attend the biennial CAHE meetings and communicate often with their counterparts in CAHE. While the period from 1986 to 1993 covers the projects, the contacts have resulted in strong personal as well as professional relationships.

Projects with CAHE

Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, 1986-1992: The longest project supported by IHES in the Caribbean was with Sir Arthur Community College (SALCC) in St. Lucia. In the fall 1985 Norma Bartlette Maynard, a faculty member of SALCC and then president of the St. Lucia Association of Home Economists, wrote to Helen Strow requesting assistance from IHES in upgrading the educational background of the home economics teachers. As a result, Helen Strow and Ruth Norman, IHES Board members, traveled to St. Lucia in April, 1986 to meet with teachers, school administrators, the staff of the Ministry of Education and SALCC to discuss their concerns and goals. Helen and Ruth visited a number of primary and secondary schools to better understand the current home economics programs. Following visits and discussions with teachers and administrators, IHES agreed to provide assistance when plans and arrangements were finalized.

Alberta Hill, a volunteer consultant, was assigned to the St. Lucia project at SALCC in the fall of 1987. During that time she served as an instructor in the classes offered during the fall term, consulted with Rita Dyer, a staff member at SALCC and Philomene Augustine, Education Officer (Home Economics) from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Rita Dyer, Head of the Home Economics

program, was given assistance in applying attending graduate school in the United States. Alberta Hill also assisted in upgrading the home economics curriculum to a two year course for those teachers without training beyond the academic secondary school. Based on recommendations from a conference of home economics supervisors of the participating Caribbean states, the training was designed so those teachers completing the course could continue on to further education. Ten Caribbean islands were involved and sent from one to six teachers each, making a total of 26 women participating in the training over the first two years.

During the time IHES worked with SALCC, IHES volunteers Alberta Hill, Wanda Montgomery, Juanita Mendenhall; consultants Carolyn Blount and Helen Shyrock; and instructors of the program to upgrade and reorganize the physical facilities of the small Department of Home Economics. Some needed equipment was provided by British Overseas Development and some small equipment and books were donated by IHES volunteers and friends. When completed all equipment worked, electrical wiring was installed, an office was constructed from a former store room, and a small library of recent home economics reference books was organized.

School Leavers Program, 1989: The Ministry of Education requested IHES assistance in solving the school-leavers problem. Each spring in St. Lucia, and in other English speaking Caribbean islands, as many as 50% of the students in primary schools failed the examination to enter secondary school and leave school at age 15. Many of the schools had no programs preparing them for employment. This resulted in young people going jobless or working in low level jobs requiring no specialized skills. The poor education meant that young people had low self esteem and earned little or no money. Early pregnancy was common.

In 1988 – 1989 a small church grant allowed one school to conduct a training program for school-leavers. Though it was well received by both students and parents, lack of funding prevented its continuation. Therefore, curriculum revisions were considered. IHES was asked to study the need for any curriculum changes. This study, a survey, was to focus, on not only current working patterns and job satisfaction, but the kinds of jobs the school-leavers would like to have. The survey was designed to interview girls who left school 5 years earlier, were chosen because of the few opportunities of work for young women with limited education as well as the high rate of pregnancy of teenagers. Information included the types of jobs they had held since leaving school, the extent to which they were able to support themselves, the pregnancy rate, self esteem, relationships with others and family makeup. Teachers, who were recruited to conduct the survey, had taught the girls and therefore knew them. A one week training program was held to prepare the teachers on techniques to

contact, interview and collect the information from the girls. The research was conducted, surveys analyzed and recommendations made for a future program

Wanda Montgomery, an IHES Board member and Jean Weaver, a volunteer consultant, traveled to St. Lucia to consider curriculum revisions from the viewpoint of potential employers of school-leavers. Meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Education and all other Ministries concerned with employment where vocational training would be required, e.g. Agriculture and Tourism. Potential employers of school-leavers were interviewed related to employment and training desired employees. In meetings with selected teachers findings were reported and curriculum revisions were made.

Workshops and Seminars in the Caribbean

In addition to the teacher training program at Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, workshops were conducted on problems identified by the Ministry of Education officials and education officers requesting help.

Care and Repair of Sewing Machines, 1990-1993: Through the teaching of the clothing classes at the College it was found that few teachers in primary schools had ever used a sewing machine and taught only hand sewing. Although each school had sewing machines they were not being used. One problem was that teachers had little experience in working with the machines and were unable to repair even small problems.

Two workshops on the care and repair of sewing machines were held in two locations. The first was given by Carolyn Joiner, a volunteer consultant, who taught a one week workshop in St. Lucia in 1990 for 20 teachers. The second workshop was held in Antigua in 2003 (date) by Helen Barrett, also a volunteer consultant, and was attended by 30 teachers. These workshops helped the teachers to broaden their programs to increase the use of the sewing machines. It also provided students the opportunity for employment in businesses which made clothing for export as well making affordable clothes for their families.

Jobs Skills Training Workshop, 1993: This one-week workshop was held in Barbados for teachers in schools where students left at age 15 emphasizing the needed skills to obtain and function successfully on a job: interviewing, writing a resume, and conducting oneself on a job. Alberta Hill and Ruth Norman, IHES Board members, and Betty Lea Trout, a volunteer consultant, conducted this program.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Workshop, 1996: Following a hurricane in Antigua in 1995 the issue of working with children in the classroom who suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became a concern of teachers. Catherine

Cumberbatch, president of CAHE, contacted IHES requesting a workshop on techniques which could be used with children in the classroom. The workshop, "Coping with Natural Disasters: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder", was organized as a "train the trainer" workshop and preceded the 1996 biennial CAHE meeting. Twenty teachers and supervisors attended, each from a different country. All agreed to conduct a similar workshop on their return. A consultant, Nancy Wallace, with experience working with families suffering from PTSD, conducted the workshop. IHES paid her expenses and a stipend. She was assisted by CAHE members. With the success of the CAHE workshop, a similar program was organized in Trinidad in the following November for members of the community who are called upon during disasters. It was also funded by IHES.

Going Solo Workshop, 2000 (St. Lucia): The Ministry of Education and the teachers continued to express a strong need for programs and teaching techniques to show students how to obtain jobs after leaving school. Peg Hoffman, IHES Board member, introduced, "Going Solo", an income generating project conducted in cooperation with CAHE in February, 2000, as a "train-the-trainer" program. Sixteen secondary or adult education teachers from 11 islands attended. Dr. Michael Mazzocco and Darlene Knipe, consultants from the University of Illinois, taught and developed the program. The workshop, a simulation game, was based on the development of small businesses. The students identified economically viable business opportunities within their community that would coincide with the strengths of the individual and deal with the competition. They learned the principles of setting up a business, how to work through the production, and how to analyze their results. On completion, each participant was expected to present a workshop in her own school district or island.

New York City

Family Planning Workshop, 1988: This workshop funded by a grant from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and conducted by IHES board members, Helen Strow and Ruth Norman, was one of the workshops preceding the IFHE Congress held in Minneapolis in 1988. Home economists from Africa and the Caribbean attended the two-week workshop which focused on the process of writing of proposals specifically for programs on family planning.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Hurricanes in 1995 were devastating to the islands of Antigua and Barbados. Ten schools with home economics programs were almost totally destroyed. A hurricane in Grenada in 2004 destroyed 90% of the island's infrastructure including the schools. Rachael Mathurine, a Grenada home economist, emailed Juanita Mendenhall with a desperate plea for immediate help, not only for the schools and their programs but for the personal and health needs of their

students. Wanda Montgomery and Juanita Mendenhall visited the island to view the damage and determine what could be done. Many members of home economics groups including those from IHES in Trinidad, IFHE-US members and American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences immediately helped. Each group organized a campaign to collect books, equipment, material and supplies needed for the programs in eight secondary schools. IHES purchased what was needed to re-establish home economics departments.

In April 2009 Juanita Mendenhall attended the CAHE Biennial Conference, held in Grenada, and was able to visit the schools IHES had helped. A remarkable recovery had taken place. Most impressive was the school whose roof and all the windows had been destroyed. It is now operating normally.

Liberia—1998-present

When the civil unrest in Liberia escalated to war in 1989, Dinah Barr, an extension home economist, wrote Helen Strow, President of IHES, from a refugee camp for Liberians in Ivory Coast where, as a refugee, she was helping other refugee women in whatever way she could. In looking forward to their return to Liberia she asked if assistance would be possible when that time came. IHES kept in contact with two leaders in home economics: Dinah Barr, director of Extension Home Economics, and Elsie Guwor, chair of the Home Economics Department of the University of Liberia. Both had degrees from U.S. universities; they were well known and respected in the community for their work and their ability to get things done.

The problems facing the country were enormous: the basic infrastructure of the country no longer existed; there were no schools, universities or community programs; no books, supplies or equipment. One news agency reported that, other than the United Nations, 90% of the help given the country was by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). IHES was one of the first NGOs to offer help.

Evaluation of Needs: In 1997 Liberia held elections and the situation calmed so that work to repair the damage could begin. 1998 Janett Gibbs and Wanda Montgomery, both IHES Board members traveled to Liberia. Working closely with Dinah Barr, Elsie Guwor and the Ministry of Agriculture, they visited several communities seeing first hand the devastation to determine the kind of help IHES could provide. They found that women in the villages were responsible for both organizing their communities and caring for their families. Their needs were desperate.

Extension Programs: IHES board members, Dinah Barr, the extension teachers, and Elsie Guwor developed a plan establishing a framework and a timeline to re-

organize and update extension. This was then discussed with the Minister of Agriculture and approved. IHES agreed to supply initial supplies and consultants to help train village extension teachers of home economics and provide help for the University.

IHES requested help from members and supporters to obtain the supplies. All contributions were sent to Janett Gibbs in Georgia, and in the summer of 1999 a 20 ft. container was sent to Liberia. Contributions included teaching materials, supplies for clothing construction, textbooks, equipment of all kinds, and general supplies. The shipping costs were covered by IHES.

In the fall of 1999, Janell Smith and Dr. Mary Keith, both volunteer consultants, traveled to Liberia to lead the first workshop with the Liberian Extension Service Home Economics Agents with the focus on food preservation and community teaching methods. Liberia's food supply was undependable and local foods needed to be preserved in ways appropriate to the available equipment. Training was provided using canning and solar drying for a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

A second workshop for Extension was conducted in 2000, Peg Hoffman, IHES board member, and Susan Reynolds a volunteer consultant. Peg Hoffman focused her teaching on entrepreneurship and crafts, while Susan Reynolds worked with the group on program planning, food preservation and general safety issues. Both reported considerable progress was apparent since the first visit by Wanda Montgomery and Janett Gibbs when they found seemingly impossible conditions. Janett Gibbs also turned to her church in Georgia which had a foundation where grants could be obtained to help churches and schools in need. Over a four-year period this foundation provided almost \$25,000 to churches and schools in Liberia

In 2000, following the second food preservation workshop in Liberia, Susan Reynolds traveled to the United Methodist Church's mission station at Ganta, Liberia. There she led program planning and curriculum development discussions with the mission school's home economics and agriculture teachers. She also taught solar cooking to the children and adults at the school and the mission station.

A home economics center, which serves 30 people, was opened in 2002 in one Liberian county and named the "Illinois Center". This was in honor of the Illinois Association of Family and Consumer Sciences which had provided aid for classes taught by Peg Hoffman, on IHES Board member.

University of Liberia: Upon return to the university Elsie Guwor was concerned about helping people with the needs she had observed in the communities

affected by years of neglect. She requested assistance in reorganizing the Department of Home Economics and Community Development in the University of Liberia. While in the country, Peg Hoffman also worked with Elsie Guwor on program development. At the same time Susan Reynolds traveled to Ganta where she volunteered with the mission center. Working with information secured by Peg Hoffman, Elsie Guwor began the process of revising the curriculum as part of the total University curriculum effort, which continues. The Department of Home Science and Community Development which were the target, has a broad curriculum which provides general education with areas of specialization in subject matter. Its goal is to provide training to students who will enter a variety of professions related to the family. All extension workers are prepared at the University.

In the fall of 1999 teacher training had resumed at the University of Liberia even though there was a shortage of books and training materials. Civil unrest resumed in Liberia early in 2000 until 2003. At that time, democratic elections were held and conditions began to normalize. Programs were renewed by those trained in the earlier workshops.

Extension Homemakers: There are many extension homemaker groups in Liberia who have always provided adult education appropriate to their community. During reconstruction, the emphasis was on raising food, not only to provide for their families but to earn money by selling the excess. To encourage income generating activities, Elsie Guwor formed a group of women who contributed a small amount of money each week which Elsie invested for them. At the end of the year the monies were returned with the interest earned which allowed the women to continue or expand their small business or use the interest for the education or other family needs. This was one of the first micro-finance efforts in Liberia Extension.

The Brewersville Homemakers Association is one of the most active of all the extension groups in Liberia. Included in their programs were adult literacy classes for young women who had no opportunity to attend school during the civil unrest; vegetable and crop production; job training for women; and micro-business classes. As NGO's began to give assistance to Liberian projects the Brewerville group was concerned that the majority of attention was given to the young people who had participated in the war. In contrast little was done for children whose homes and schools had been destroyed and who had lost one or both parents. The Brewersville Homemakers Association joined with a church and an additional educational group to build a school in a village, which had been deserted during the civil war. When the classrooms were completed, they hired teachers and enrolled students for a kindergarten and first grade class.

The children did not have clothing to wear to school so the first year bales of used clothing were purchased and distributed. The second year designated funds of IHES were used to purchase school uniforms from locally available fabric which was sewn by extension homemakers. Used T shirts were dyed in their school colors. Each year additional classrooms have been built and additional students at higher grade levels have attended the school.

Home economists in Liberia continue to face many problems: women are often single heads of households; children are malnourished; housing is poor; transportation is difficult with impassible roads. The leaders in Liberia keep in touch with IHES through email and, when help is needed, it is given. Peg Hoffman, IHES Board member, the Illinois Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and the faculty of the University of Illinois continue to contribute curriculum materials and text books with IHES helping with shipping costs.

Thailand

IHES provided support for a vocational training course in a training center for girls from the northern mountainous area of Thailand. This center, started by the Women's Department of Christian churches in Thailand, was for girls from poor families who lacked opportunities for vocational training and, in addition, were at risk of being sexually abused and/or exploited. Woraporn Tharawanich, a home economist in the vocational education department of the Kasetsart University in Thailand, the leader of this project, requested help from IHES. IHES supported courses in basic home economics subject matter: home management, health, nutrition, and child care. Incorporated were practical applications of the concepts and skills which could be applied to earning money to be self supporting as well as to contribute to the family.

South Africa

Kroonstad, 2002: Mary Beaubien, an IHES Board member went to South Africa in 2002, working first with a primary school, then at a training center for women who had HIV/AIDs or families affected by HIV/AIDs. At that training center she helped the women learn saleable craft skills and, with the women, founded a cooperative to produce and sell the items. IHES sent craft materials, supplies and equipment.

Eastern Cape Province, 2004: Beatrice Bagby, a volunteer consultant, conducted a project titled, "Through Your Eyes" in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The purpose of the project was to introduce informal methods of extension applied to 4-H programs in place of the more formal methods used by the school system. This program integrated the study of the environment through the use of disposable cameras. It also emphasized the inclusion of girls

in 4-H club work, something not done in other areas of South Africa, as well as strengthening extension programs

Russia

Novgorod, 2002: A tour to Novgorod following the IFHE Council meeting in Helsinki (2002), organized by Swedish volunteers, provided an opportunity for IHES Board members to meet with Margaretha Sjoegren, a Swedish member of IFHE. Margaretha Sjoegren and Elisabeth Simelton worked with Marina Potaova, as volunteers with a group of women in the rural areas of Novgorod, Russia an area with a high unemployment rate. This group of women requested help in the development of skills needed to successfully operate their own small businesses. Two workshops had already been provided with the assistance from Swedish home economists. In the evaluation of the workshops, the women requested a third workshop based on suggestions following the earlier seminars: that of further development of management techniques and additional ideas for seminars: such as increasing the effectiveness of their small businesses. However, in order to organize the third seminar, financial aid was needed. IHES Board recommended that a proposal be written and presented for consideration. This was accomplished and the funds needed were sent to support the third seminar. It was attended by 30 women.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The IHES goal of providing opportunities for professional growth has been accomplished through several means:

- Paying IFHE organizational dues for country organizations which had not previously been members. IHES paid the organizational dues for five Caribbean Associations of Home Economists for one or more years between 1991-2005.
- Providing financial support for IFHE regional meetings; IHES has contributed financially to each of the IFHE Region of the Americas meetings which included Puerto Rico (1998), Fort Worth Texas (2002), and the Bahamas (2007). IHES also supported two IFHE Region of Africa meetings—Sudan (2005) and Cameroon (2007); and a meeting of the Region of Asia in Thailand (1987).
- Awarding grants to cover partial expenses (e.g. registration, travel or housing) for IFHE members from developing countries who would not be able to attend IFHE Council or Congresses without financial help. Grants or scholarships were awarded to individual IFHE members at attend meetings. CAHE members, because of the proximity of the Caribbean and the

involvement of IHES in projects and meetings, have received most support. The results were rewarding: regular attendance by CAHE members at IFHE meetings; professional involvement through the presentation of papers and posters at IFHE Congresses; and professional leadership roles in the Region of the Americas and IFHE.

- African members of IFHE were helped to attend the two African regional meetings. As a result of this help, in addition to attending meetings, more African home economists have become professionally involved in IFHE.
- In 2008, 9 scholarships of \$1,000 each were awarded to IFHE member applicants from 9 different countries of the developing world to attend the IFHE Jubilee Congress in Lucerne, Switzerland. None of these members would have been able to attend without the financial assistance. It should be noted that IHES was the only group providing travel assistance to the Congress.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

During its 36 years of existence, IHES has received almost all (90%) of its resources from home economists in the United States. Projects are primarily financed through individual contributions from friends and colleagues in response to an annual letter sent to those interested in global programs aimed at improving family life. Board members assume all of the expenses related to their responsibilities, thus nearly 100% of the money from contributions is available for projects. The number of people donating money annually varies from 50 to about 200-300 individuals. The majority of donations range between \$25 and \$50, although some are much larger amounts, often for the support of specific projects. In the late 1990s the Board decided a reserve fund was needed and approved setting aside (investing) \$15,000 as a minimum amount.

Some grants have also been received to contribute to projects. Grants have been received from UNICEF, Southern Living Foundation, The Weeden Foundation, the North Carolina Community Foundation, and the Minnesota HEIH Cookbook Fund. The grants have usually been designated for selected projects such as population education, the Liberian project, the St. Lucia school leavers' project, etc.

Projects and programs have involved home economists on five continents and from more than 30 countries. More than \$120,000 has been expended to support projects. The percentage distribution of funds is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Funds

Projects/Country	% of IHES Funds
Liberian home economics programs—extension and university	21
Population education and scholarships	16
Scholarships for teachers to attend workshops, Caribbean	15
Support for IFHE Regional Meetings	14
Grants to attend IFHE Congresses/Council meetings	12
St. Lucia home economics and school leavers projects	8
Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (upgrade teacher educ)	8
Miscellaneous Workshops and programs	5

A number of projects have encouraged in-kind contributions of books, equipment and supplies. In addition, publishers and companies who supplied sewing materials, were generous in their contributions.

The International Division of AAFCS (AHEA) and IFHE-US have cooperated in collecting items, especially for the Liberian project and assistance to countries devastated by hurricanes. Volunteers, including IHES Board members and outside consultants, have contributed an estimated minimum of three to four years of time in the Caribbean through teaching, working with teachers, conducting workshops, conducting surveys and writing reports and recommendations. Approximately another year of volunteer time has been used for assistance in Liberia. Collecting, packing, transporting and shipping of items both to Liberia and the Caribbean would add many additional months of donated time. The majority of this work has been coordinated through Janett Gibbs out of the Athens, Georgia “collection center”.

SPINOFFS AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER GROUPS

Enthusiasm about the IHES programs, the needs identified and the value of helping those who have unmet needs have created spin-offs to the projects related to IHES projects.

The “scissors” story has caught the interest of many and illustrated what an individual can accomplish. A year following the 9/11 attacks, the evening news in Atlanta showed boxes of knives, scissors and other sharp objects, confiscated by the airport security. Janett Gibbs immediately decided to ask for the scissors because she knew from her trip to Liberia that scissors were very valuable to extension homemakers, and others. She wrote to the department in the airport in charge of security requesting the scissors for IHES projects, women’s groups and schools. Until the government took over security, monthly collections were made. Janette collected many thousands of scissors. These were repackaged and

distributed, not only to Liberia but to a total of eleven countries to extension homemakers and women's groups nearly all of whom had few scissors.

SUMMARY

While IHES provides resources, (e.g. money, time and expertise); more important is the opportunity to respond to the needs of colleagues where resources could be of help. The IHES board members, as well as the volunteer consultants, gained as much, perhaps more, from the experience of working with our colleagues from other countries and cultures as they gain from the Board members. The experiences go beyond that of helping others and gaining a better understanding of the needs of professional colleagues and families in other cultures. Strong friendships develop which resume at each IFHE meeting as well as before and after, including visiting in each other's homes and exchanging emails, phone calls, cards and letters. For IHES differences among those served disappear and strengthen the globalization of the profession of home economics.

IHES Board members who were major contributors to this history:

For the Caribbean:

Alberta Hill
Juanita Mendenhall
Ruth Norman

For the Caribbean and Liberia:

Wanda Montgomery
Mary Margaret (Peg) Hoffman
Janett Gibbs