

Founding Principles of the Home Economics Education Research Lab of Wayo Women's University

In 2022 Wayo Women's University celebrated the 125th anniversary of its founding. Chiyo Horikoshi, a renowned pioneer in women's education who was far ahead of her times, laid the foundation for the university by encouraging women's economic independence and social advancement through practical education in Western-style dressmaking. Her vision and teaching, which not only set forth a noble ideal but laid out a concrete path to attain it, are the very essence of home economics and home economics education. This educational practice has borne fruit in various ways for our graduates, most of whom become active and productive members of society.

People's lives have changed dramatically over these 125 years. Numerous global challenges—the environment, international understanding, economic development, human rights, world peace—confront us, and effectively addressing these issues and moving towards sustainable societies is fraught with difficulty. The explosion in complex information systems which are often beyond our capacity to comprehend, as well as rapidly shifting public policy that is reshaping our lives, create uncertainty and instability for us all.

What, then, is required of us living in these turbulent times? It is to examine recent developments from the perspective of better human living. Rather than accept that our choices are restricted by prevailing values and the current environment, we must express our clear intentions that "this is how we want to live" and "this is how we want to build our community and society," and reorganize our lives to work towards these ends. To bring everyone into the process we must foster involvement through voluntary learning and action.

These aims will not be realized by a single leader. As Chiyo Horikoshi practiced herself, it is necessary to encourage others to discover the paths and acquire the methods by which they can attain such goals on their own. In order to expand attitudes toward, and activities promoting, new ways of living, each individual must discover his or her preferred lifestyle and then acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to help make it a reality. By not only teaching how to address individual lifestyle and family challenges, but also aiding in the acquisition of life skills that can directly lead to the formation of a new society, the education provided by home economics has a vital role to play.

In order for home economics to live up to these expectations and fulfill its role, it must realize the empowerment of home economics itself as well as the teachers who put this discipline into practice. To this end, it is essential for those of us involved in home economics education to learn from each other's knowledge and experience, and create relationships and connections that allow us to think together about how to overcome challenges by putting solutions into practice.

The Home Economics Education Research Lab was established to meet the challenges and pursue the goals noted above. Its aim is to function as a base for those involved in home economics education to collaborate beyond their respective positions and areas of expertise. We hope the Lab will become the stage for a variety of activities, such as: lively cooperation among researchers in various fields of home economics; the exploration of possible future directions for home economics; research into how the results of academic work can be put into practice so that positive cycles of research and practice take shape; the connecting of teachers, exchanging of information, and building of relationships based on mutual learning and support; and the creation of structures that foster the study or relearning of home economics at any stage of a person's life.

We warmly invite home economics education specialists, teachers, students, and anyone else interested in home economics education to consider becoming a member of the Home Economics Education Research Lab.