

# **SUSTAINING HOME ECONOMICS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Sue L.T. McGregor**

**Canada**

**2006**

**Ankara, Turkey**

**Home Economics**

**Conference**



**Capital** refers to resources  
which are available to make something grow.  
This conference is concerned with how the  
sustainability of natural, human, social, economic  
and manufactured capital  
*is located in home economics practice.*

The profession needs to draw on its own kind of  
capital (resources) to answer this question.

A profession's most valuable capital is the  
knowledge of its people - its *intellectual assets*,  
*intellectual capital*, and *philosophical capital*.

ALSO, *leadership capital* is the resources available  
to fuel an agenda.

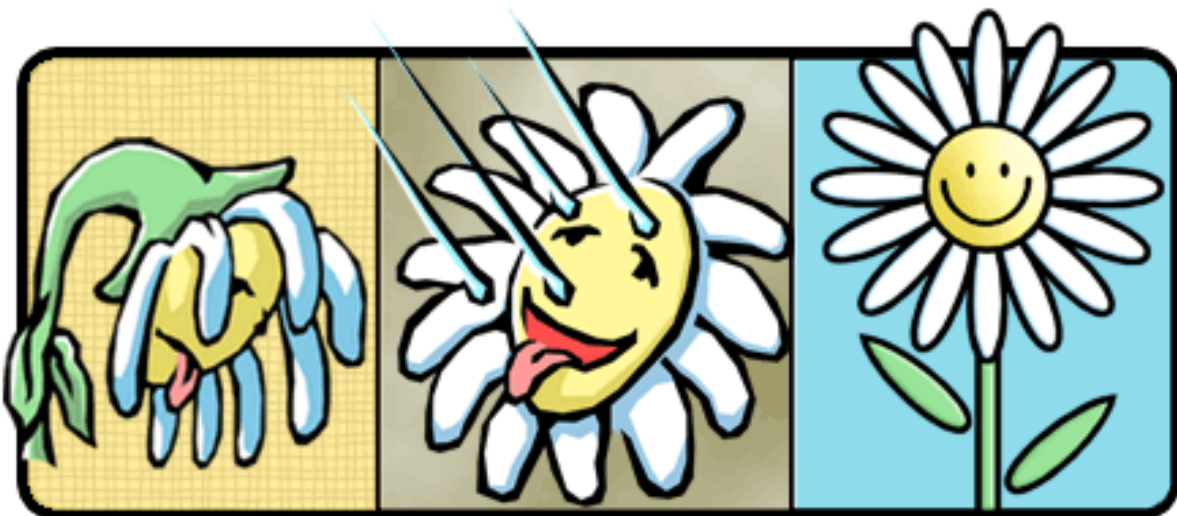
This type of capital is invisible, because it involves  
people, relationships and ideas (philosophy), all  
affecting reputation, character, competence, and  
creativity.

**CAPITAL**

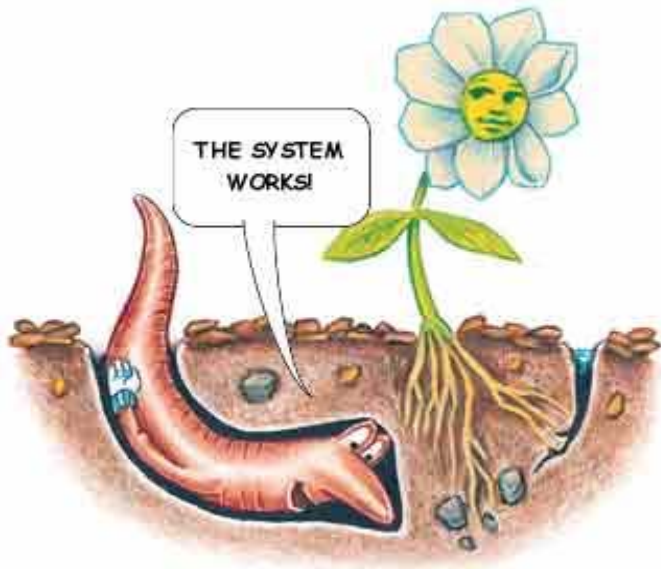


**Home economics is a plant/tree with a stem/trunk and an invisible root system (the philosophy)**

If the invisible roots (philosophy) are not healthy, the plant will die. But, it takes a tree (for example) 1-10 years to die from poor roots. On the other hand, if even just 1/4 of the roots are nurtured, the tree or plant (profession) can recover, and flourish again.



**Inappropriate Philosophy - Leaders suggest a new philosophy -Renewed Profession**



Members of the profession have to keep checking to see if the root system (belief system) is OK. If there is no attempt to drain away the parts that do not work anymore, it will take years for people to realize that

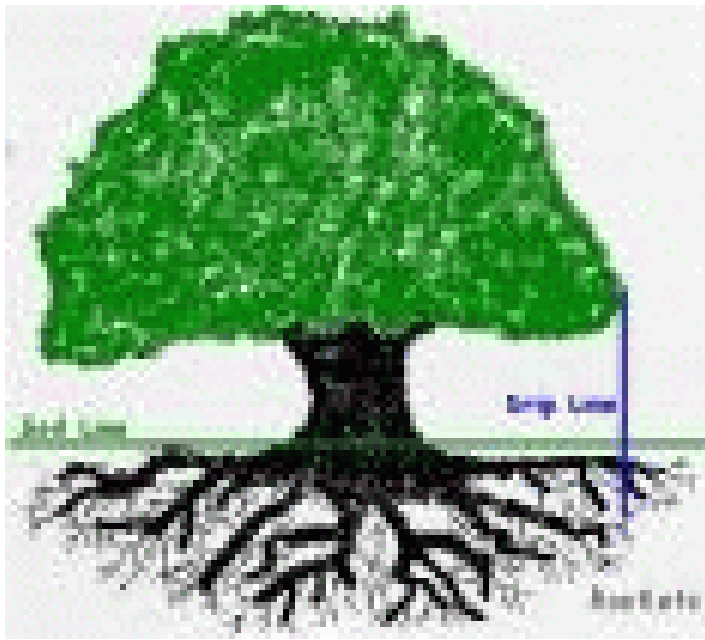
what the profession is doing is not appropriate anymore. The profession can experience a slow, eventual decline.

# Good News!

**There are two kinds of roots - large transport roots, and tiny feeder roots**







The feeder roots are at the tree drip line (grey), always reaching outward. Home economics leaders need to be on the 'leading edge', at the drip line, pushing new boundaries, expanding the profession's belief system (root system).



**See the circle** - the best place to water a tree and to apply fertilizer is at the drip line. The profession needs to nurture its leadership capital and its philosophical capital (leaders on the outer edge - the vanguard of the profession - on the yellow circle).

*Sustain by nurturing*

## Transport Roots

Brittle, dead, old  
Worn-out  
Support for tree

## Feeder Roots

Flexible, alive, new  
Fresh  
Growth of tree

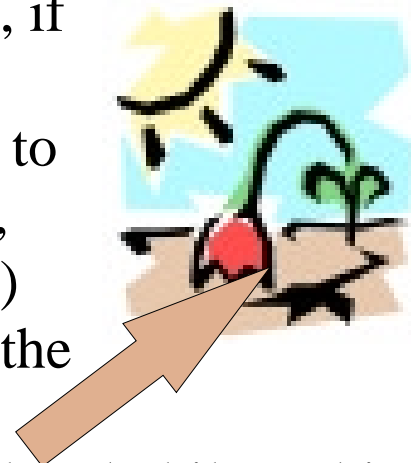
## What if Tree is Uprooted?



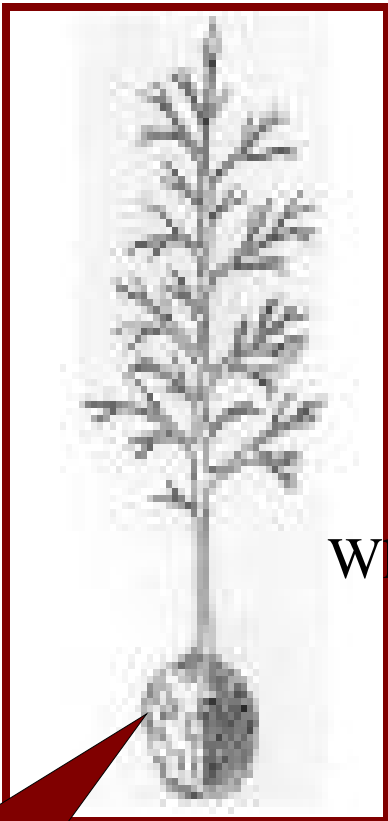
Because the roots are wide and shallow, a tree can be easily uprooted. Because there are so many feeder roots, it can recover and regrow. It will look different, but it will be alive and can thrive.

The same can be said for home economics. Our profession has been uprooted. But, if our philosophy (feeder roots) is strong, it can revive, and continue to grow. If it gets uprooted too often, the fragile feeder roots (new ideas) could get ripped off, leaving only the old philosophy. To avoid this...

we have to build leadership capital and philosophical capital as strong resources for our future.



wrtech.com



**What if you are planting for the first time, or replanting a tree or plant?**

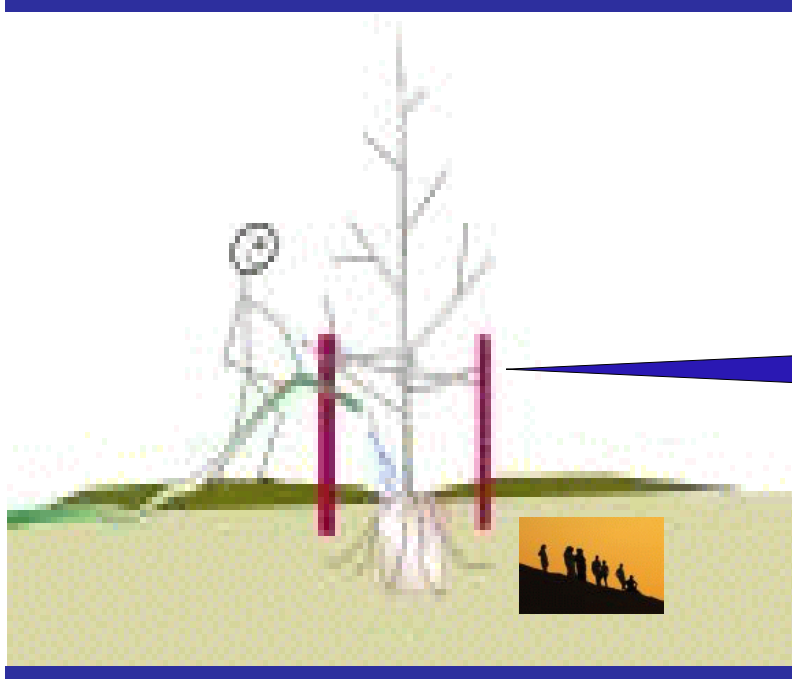
## **You need a root ball...**

When a plant is pulled out of the ground, 98% of the root system **stays in the ground**. This means the feeder roots (philosophy) get left behind, or severely damaged, making it very hard for the plant to grow in the new place. This can be prevented by creating a ball of protection around the roots (wrap carefully in cloth).

Also, the trunk or stem has to be in the center of the ball of roots or else there will be an uneven distribution of roots, leading to wounds in the plant.

If someone tells you that all of these new ideas make them feel like they have been uprooted, torn out of a secure place, their stress needs to be recognized, and respected (we need to stake up the tree, so it can grow in the new space).





To shift belief systems in the profession, those using the old ways need to be supported while they change and

we must stand behind those seeking the new ways, because they need support, too.

We must agree on a new philosophical direction, and use our leadership capital to move in that direction. The result will be a solid foundation of vision, mission, principles, beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices.

The most effective way to locate sustainability within the work of home economics is to sustain ourselves with a guiding philosophy (root system).

**Philosophy means friendship and wisdom. Sustain means support from below (our roots).**

**Sustain our philosophy.**

