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INTERNATIONAL TRADE EDUCATION BY GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH EXTENSION HOME ECONOMICS

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Family members today have an opportunity to be a part of international affairs through news reports and instant pictures by satellite from around the world. International programs have grown in interest as transportation and monies have permitted the average American to host international visitors or to travel abroad for business or pleasure. Many of us have learned the geography, culture, business, and economics of countries through a lecture series, workshop, international festival or study.

I've been asked here to share with you some exciting programming we have been doing with Extension homemaker councils and clubs in Missouri.

We believe in family life education through the "group model" of learning. Through this method we indirectly have had impact on more than 20,000 Missouri families. These people are a mix of our population as about one third are under 35 years of age, one third are in their mid-years, and one third are over 60. Likewise, about half are considered rural, one fourth live in villages or small towns, and one fourth are urban dwellers. Missouri is a diversified state with two large cities with East/West entrances on I-70, and four secondary cities connected with a transportation system to serve as trade and educational centers for out-state Missourians. Through this geographic sprawl, Cooperative Extension has put into place an effective network to reach people with learning opportunities which meet the needs of its people.

A brief historical review tells us that continuing education efforts began with Missouri women more than 60 years ago when Extension homemaker clubs were formed. The early program of study related to the family and the skills needed to clothe, feed and house family members. With societal changes brought about by wars, social unrest, affluence of the '60s, independence of self, morality issues, and economic depression the Extension mission continues to change its focus.

The late 1970s and early '80s netted experienced volunteers and professionals working together through advisory planning commit-

tees. A focus has been on needs of the changing family. Today, 52 percent of the women work outside the home and one third are single heads of the household. These family members share an interest in the political and business community in which they live and interact. Many of them seek a place on committees or boards where decisions are made.

Within the structure of Missouri Extension Homemakers Association (MEHA) the organization of elected and appointed board members, 10 educational committees were identified for focus. Studies are related to family, home, and community. This corresponds with the National Extension Homemakers Council (NEHC) guidelines, the national tie for MEHA.

One of these committees is International Affairs. In the first phase of a three-year suggested plan of study, programs were designed by volunteer leaders and university specialists. The planning committee met numerous times to identify issues and seek approval of the extension homemakers council. It then put into writing the suggested plan which was made available to local people through the MEHA and Extension network.

Goals for this first series included:

- a. To understand the role of international affairs in world peace.
- b. To become knowledgeable of the relationship among food, minerals, and energy.

Areas of in-depth study were focused on and included subjects of:

- a. University of Missouri's role in international agriculture.
- b. Understanding population crisis in relation to the country's culture and policies.
- c. Roles of women in improving agriculture and family life.
- d. Study of alternate patterns of food distribution, including "Food for Peace."
- e. World food resources: Do we need them? How are they financed? How are they administered?
- f. Emphasis on the development of agriculture and nutrition technology.

To support the programs, University Extension provides:

- a. Resources and selected readings on world population and food.
- b. Audio/visual tapes on world food and population.
- c. Leader workshops conducted at district meeting to introduce the study plan.
- d. Workshops at state leaders conference.

- e. Follow up with leaders who multiply efforts by holding local workshops or meetings.

Local leaders worked with the "Stamps for Hunger" project of the USDA and the Salvation Army as suggested by the national association. In 1980, our groups saved 429,000 cancelled and trimmed stamps which netted 1,531 glasses of milk for children. One hundred percent of the clubs participated in this activity.

Lessons were also directed to the study of the culture, customs, and foods of one country; for example, Kenya where the international organization hosted the triennial conference. Resources were provided by University Extension and Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

This three-year study provided good results in creating awareness, gaining individual knowledge, citizen participation with the local grain cooperatives, and attendance at farm conferences, where policy issues were discussed. Yes, citizens do become involved if given the opportunity to know and to have a voice in the decision making. In addition, dollars were provided to send the state MEHA president as a voting delegate to Kenya to the ACWW Conference.

In 1982, we are into a second, three year plan of study "Explore the 1980s." Emphasis continues to be on:

- a. Understanding of international life and affairs.
- b. Good will and friendships between people of this country and other countries.
- c. Competence and confidence in participation in discussions or political strategies needed to deal with markets or policies affecting Missourians as related to grain or livestock products.

Eighty-six of 114 Missouri counties reported in May, 1982 that local clubs, county studies, and state leader studies have dealt with topics of:

- a. Issues concerning the interdependence of United States industrialization with other countries.
- b. Agricultural development and its effect on life styles, i.e. oil supplies, grains, food and fiber products, mineral resources, imports and exports.
- c. Third world countries.
- d. The site of the ACWW meeting (Hamburg, West Germany 1980 and Vancouver, British Columbia in 1983).

Again, district and state leaders workshops were held to support this three-year plan of study.

Topics for focus included:

- a. Why do we trade? Overview of issues and a suggested paper clipping activity for participants.
- b. Imports/exports and their international implications (39 women at state UMC workshop).
- c. Foreign trade and the United States, with emphasis on the United States and Canada trade policy (coming up in 1983).
- d. International trade and policy.

Resources were provided by university specialists and included the "Great Decisions" study packets. Other reference materials came through the NEHC educational chairman and the ACWW London Headquarters.

Volunteers of the state organization of Missouri Extension Homemakers sought out the opportunity to host the ACWW President from Kenya 1976, Australia 1977, and the Netherlands 1982. Each world leader gave new insights into women's programs with suggested impacts the volunteers might have on policies at ACWW, UNESCO, CWC and UN (through their voting representative).

Issues of energy, world hunger and water stand out as future priority subjects to be dealt with by knowledgeable volunteer leaders who know how to influence policymakers in strategic positions.

The advancement of our people in an international world can best be made with informed and knowledgeable citizens. Our successes shall be measured by the involved and active leadership we train. We do have a commitment with our mission to serve people. Together, as men and women professionals, the opportunities for innovative programming are unlimited.

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