

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING: BRAZIL AND LATIN AMERICA CONQUERING THE INTERNATIONAL NURSING SCENE

Isabel Amélia Costa Mendes¹
Maria Helena Palucci Marziale²

The United Nations system grants the World Health Organization the authority to guide health issues, in articulation with member countries. Thus, the organization takes the lead in global health issues, proposes research agendas, establishes policies and strategies, recommends norms and standards, offers technical support, monitors and assesses health tendencies in different cultures inherent in its 193 member countries.

In such a broad and complex context, the WHO receives advice, in each health specialty, to collaborate in the implementation of technical cooperation program in the global, regional and interregional spheres. Therefore, this global organization identifies institutions whose profile and performance have the potential to serve as partners in the implementation of programs set up in the light of the policies annually determined at the World Health Assembly. As WHO referral institutes in specific specialties, these institutions are called Collaborating Centres⁽¹⁾.

Nowadays, WHO has about 900 Collaborating Centres, 38 of which in Nursing.

Traditionally, the evolution of the Nursing profession has demonstrated special attention to internationalization, to the creation of international organization that join leaderships who are capable of dynamizing expert groups, integrating regions and countries and strengthening the profession and its professionals. Thus, joining forces through associations, with different goals, has resulted in union and representativeness in society. This movement of constant evolution in this direction was decisive for Nursing to promote an innovation at WHO in the context of its set of Collaborating Centres: it was the first area to constitute a Network, seeking to connect its members and, at the same time, a better integration of each member's work with WHO. Thus, the creation of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Development (GNWHOCC) is one of the successful examples of the evolution process in the internationalization of the profession.

Since its emergence in 1987, this Global Network has been consolidating itself as a significant force of international leadership; its sphere of influence, integration, initiatives and ability in the development of collaborative projects has resulted in a representative impact on global health⁽²⁾.

Constituted by 38 centers, nowadays, the Network's structure consists of a General Secretariat, whose headquarters migrates to one Collaborating Centre every four years. The coordination is the responsibility of a Secretary General, an elective function that goes to the Director of one of the centers. The Secretary General is the executive agent of the Executive Committee, which consists of one member from each of the six WHO regions, which represent all centers in their respective region. Since its establishment, the Network has been headquartered in centers located in the United States (three mandates), Korea and the United Kingdom (two mandates).

The mandate of the next management goes from 2008 to 2012, but the Director of the center is already serving as the Secretary General-Elect to guarantee a smooth transition process with the current Secretary at Glasgow Caledonian University - Scotland.

Thus, from 2008 onwards, the Headquarters of the Global Network will be the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing Research Development - Brazil, hosted by the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing. This constitutes a relevant fact for Nursing in the Americas, especially for Latin America, which assumes this position for the first time.

Besides complying with its mission as the Headquarters of the Global Network, the Collaborating Centre hopes that this function may also serve as a stimulus for networking at national, regional and international level, increasing the visibility of contributions accomplished by professionals from all WHO regions, with a view to achieve the goal of Health for All.

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