



Building Children's Nursing for Africa Conference: 22–24 April 2015

A participative conference for neonatal, paediatric and paediatric critical care nurses to celebrate and build best practice of nurses in caring for children and their families

Report from day 3: Together, WE Can Change the Nursing Profession

Teaching and learning are an important part of any profession; in nursing it is no different. The final day of the 2015 Building Children's Nursing conference (BCN) focused on the best methods in which nurses can be taught that inspires positive changes and motivates for the improvement of children's nursing practices. Delegates from different parts of Africa spoke about both the challenges and positive improvements that revolve around the training of paediatric nurses. They did this through case studies and the practical applications of evidence-based practices.

Before moving into the day's presentations, Minette Coetzee, Conference chair and Associate Professor with the Child Nurse Practice Development Initiative, reminded all delegates about the power of nurses' voices and that we need nurses to 'speak up' and share evidence-based practices in order to effect positive change. "[This] collaboration with one another will grow and allow us to grow the evidence and get it out there," says Minette. This positive message indeed underpins the purpose of the entire conference, as children's nurses have been constantly encouraged to participate in the gathering of practical information that can be used to instil positive changes in the practice of children's nursing.

From here, case studies and practical examples were shared from various facilities around Africa – primarily those from South Africa, Malawi, and Zambia. These presentations mostly revolved around the practical applications of training and teaching children's nurses in effective and potentially beneficial ways. Maureen Majamanda (pictured above, middle right) from the Kamuzu College of Nursing in Malawi spoke about their inclusive nurses' training methods at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, while Priscar Mukonka and Eric Chisupa, from Zambia, spoke about the recently launched Lusaka School of Paediatric and Child Health Nursing programme, which is the first school in Zambia to offer a course solely for children's nursing.

The day drew to a close with many thanks not only to the contributors of the BCN 2015 conference, but also to the delegates themselves. The closing speech was appropriately given by Eugene Murphy, an ex-patient of Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RCWMCH), who has grown up, married, and fathered two children, thanks, in part, to the capable care of children's nurses.

Conference delegates closed the proceedings through song, with Thandiwe Godzana, from Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, giving some encouraging final words (inspired by Albert Einstein): "Brothers and sisters, colleagues and the entire nurse's profession: courage is never to let your actions be influenced by your fears. 'Nothing I can do can change the structure of the universe, but maybe, by raising my voice, I can help the greatest of all causes...' - improved child health outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond!

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