



Building Children's Nursing for Africa Conference: 17–19 April 2013

A participative conference for neonatal, paediatric and paediatric critical care nurses to celebrate and build on what nurses do well in caring for children and their families

Celebrating, networking, encouraging and building: this was the order of the day for the 3-day *Building Children's Nursing for Africa Conference* held in Cape Town in April this year. The Child Nurse Practice Development Initiative, in collaboration with the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, played proud host to over 140 delegates from across sub-Saharan Africa and from further afield, all gathering to both acknowledge and build on what nurses do best in caring for sick children and their families.

Conference themes were as follows:

- Best practice in children's nursing has measurable outcomes;
- Best practice in children's nursing intentionally includes families;
- Best practice in teaching and learning for children's nursing;
- Best practice in different teams and settings.

Keynote speakers, from Kenya, Brazil and the USA, presented on nurse-led research and initiatives undertaken for the purpose of improving nursing and health care practice in child and family care in their respective countries. Many other interesting, high quality papers were presented by a range of health care professionals. Click [here](#) for the full abstract book. As an overall, conference proceedings highlighted the work of nurses to be *integral* in developing, establishing and implementing best care practices for sick children for better health outcomes overall.

An additional thread running through the conference was that of 'I am not just a nurse'. Premiered at the conference, the video "**I am not just a nurse**" was received with great applause. Conceived out of an awareness of and a concern for the fact that some nurses consider themselves to be 'just a nurse', and that others perceive those in the profession to be 'just' nurses, the Child Nurse Practice Development Initiative decided to set out to allay this perception. We started by asking nurses to complete the statement, 'I'm not just a nurse, I'm a...'. and the resultant video summarised their responses and communicates to the wider public, the '*true value of nurses*'. Click [here](#) to watch the video

The conference was a *huge* success and the Child Nurse Practice Development Initiative was particularly grateful to all the delegates - how good it was to touch base with the many strong, dedicated, innovative and articulate professionals that proudly exist as advocates for child and family health care on the African continent, and of course to make new friends with so many with others!